

The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

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No. 1

THE INSPIRATIONS OF NATURE

Oh Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. Ps. 104:24.

Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall he not much more clothe you, Oh ye of little faith? Matt. 6:30.

The garment of truth is a seamless robe and has fallen upon the shoulders of prophet, psalmist, poet and scientist; who in turn have spoken "a various language" to the mind and heart of man.

It was Bryant who wrote, "The groves were God's first temples," and in the silent stillness of their winding aisles have we not felt the close approaching and overbrooding presence of Him who standeth "within the shadows keeping watch above his own"? At such times what is deepest in our lives rises in quiet majesty to meet and commune with what is deepest in the heart of Nature, and we sense the nearness of those invisible hands that are said "to reach through Nature, moulding man."

It was Wordsworth who told man to go forth into the light of things and let Nature be his teacher,—*"And forth into the fields I went and Nature's living motion lent the pulse of hope to discontent."* Nature is not only our teacher but our friend and comforter; for the "God of the Open Air" is the God of prophet, psalmist, poet and scholar.

Nature has always imparted the secret of her mysterious power to those who have expected much and ventured more. Nature does not intrude herself upon our time and thought but keeps open house and quietly waits for us to send in our calling card, which is just a sincere desire to make her acquaintance.

Nature is speechless in the presence of a Peter Bell but she pours out her very soul to those who have eyes to see, minds

to know and hearts to love. A short poem by Mary Carolyn Davis entitled "Be Def-
erent to Trees" emphasizes this truth. It reads like this:

"The talking oak
To the ancient spoke,
But any tree
Will talk to me.
What I know
I garnered so.
But those who want to talk and tell,
And those who will not listeners be,
Will never hear a syllable
From out the lips of any tree."

No one ever more intimately, more lovingly or more reverently communed with the visible forms of Creation than did Jesus and to no one has Nature ever imparted more of her inner charm, marvel, order, harmony, beauty, truth and inspirations than to him.

No one ever found such sublime messages, as did he, in the growth of corn,—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; the withered fig tree; the mustard seed; the sower and seed and earth; the bounties of Nature; the marvels of sky and wind and rain and sunshine; and in the lilies of the field;—*"Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall he not much more clothe you, Oh ye of little faith?"*

It was not at all strange that primitive peoples were terrified by certain aspects of Nature,—floods, whirlwinds, thunder storms, volcanoes and earthquakes. They could not know, as we now do, that these were all necessary to the never ending

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process of world construction. Nature is
not all "red in tooth and claw." Let
Browning say the right word for us here.
"I have gone the whole round of Creation:
I saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose,
Received in my brain,
His creature's approval or censure:
I spoke as I saw:
I report, as a man may of God's work—
All's Love, Yet All's Law."

Emerson found many an inspiration in
Nature and we have one of these in his
exquisite poem, "The Rhodora." He was
asked "Whence the flower?" and an-
swered in part thus:

"Rhodora, if the sages ask thee
Why thou wert there, O rival of the
rose;
Tell them dear,
I never thought to ask, I never knew;
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that
Brought me there brought you."

We go forth into the open air to be re-
created and likewise to consult the Dean
of Physicians whose remedies are for
both mind and body. We go forth to re-
gain over ourselves the mastery we may
have all unwittingly surrendered to the
force of circumstances or the caprice of
fashion. We go forth to clarify our vision
and to have our burdens lightened by hav-
ing our yokes better fitted to our
shoulders. We do not ask for fewer bur-
dens and responsibilities but for more
wisdom and power, courage and faith that
we may no longer carry them with such a
blundering stupidity.

The Inspirations of Nature are always
at hand but "What is so rare as a day in

June?" What more rare than the inspira-
tions that came to Dr. Van Dyke and
which he has left for us in his poem,
"God of the Open Air." So fitting a con-
clusion it is that we will use it as our
closing thought.

"Thou who hast made thy dwelling fair
With flowers beneath, above with starry
lights,

And set thine altars everywhere,—

On mountain heights,

In woodlands dim with many a dream,

In valleys bright with springs,

And on the curving capes of every
stream:

Thou hast taken to thyself the wings

Of morning, to abide

Upon the secret places of the sea,

And on far islands, where the tide

Visits the beauty of untrodden shores,

Waiting for worshippers to come to Thee

In thy great out-of-doors!

To thee I turn, to thee I make my prayer,
God of the Open Air.

"These are the gifts I ask

Of thee, Spirit serene:

Strength for the daily task,

Courage to face the road,

Good cheer to help me bear the trav-
eller's load,

And, for the hours of rest that come be-
tween,

An inward joy in all things heard and
seen.

"These are the sins I fain

Would have thee take away:

Malice and cold disdain,

Hot anger, and sullen hate,

Scorn of the lowly, envy of the great,

And discontent that casts a shadow
gray

On all the brightness of the common day.

"These are the things I prize

And hold of dearest worth:

Light of the sapphire skies,

Peace of the silent hills,

Shelter of forests, comfort of the grass,

Music of birds, murmur of little rills,

Shadow of clouds that swiftly pass,

And after showers,
 The smell of flowers,
 And the good brown earth,—
 And best of all, along the way, friend-
 ship and mirth.

“For the comforting warmth of the sun
 that my body embraces,
 For the cool of the waters that run
 through the shadowy places,
 For the balm of the breezes that brush
 my face with their fingers,
 For the vesper-hymn of the thrush
 when the twilight lingers,
 For the long breath, the deep breath, the
 breath of a heart without care,—
 I will give thanks and adore thee,
 God of the Open air.

“So let me keep
 These treasures of the humble heart
 In true possession, owning them by love;
 And when at last I can no longer move
 Among them freely, but must part
 From the green fields and from the
 waters clear,
 Let me not creep
 Into some darkened room and hide
 From all that makes the world so bright
 and dear;

But throw the windows wide
 To welcome in the light;
 And while I clasp a well-beloved hand,
 Let me once more have sight
 Of the deep sky and the far-smiling
 land,—

Then gently fall on sleep,
 And breathe my body back to Nature's
 care,
 My spirit out to thee, God of the Open
 Air.”

“Oh Lord, how manifold are thy works;
 in wisdom hast thou made them all; the
 earth is full of thy riches.”

“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass
 of the field . . . shall he not much more
 clothe you, Oh ye of little faith?”

—*Rev. Frederick W. Smith.*

Whosoever loves God with all his heart
 can but serve Him with all his strength.
 —*Wesley.*

THE LEGEND OF THE LAZY MAN

By HOWARD J. CHIDLEY

There is a story about Christ and His disciples which you will not find in the Bible. But it has such a fine lesson in it that I think it might well have been put beside other New Testament stories.

It is said that one day Christ with His twelve followers was passing through a very stony field. The Master noticed that the soil was very rich, but that the field was not tilled because of the stones scattered so thickly over its surface. Christ said: “What a shame that this rich soil is going to waste, and all for the sake of someone to pick these stones. Let each of us carry off as many as he can as we pass through.” All the men except one readily picked up as many stones as he could carry. This man hunted about to find as small a stone as possible, and when he found a mere pebble, he carried it off with him.

When the disciples reached the other side of the field they threw the stones into a pile. It was noon, and time for something to eat. They were all hungry, but none of the company had brought anything to eat. Christ then turned into loaves of bread the stones the men had carried off the field, and gave to each man as his meal the bread made from the stone he had carried. Of course the man who had carried the largest stone got the largest loaf. But the man who carried off the pebble got a very small meal.

Toward evening Christ and the disciples were passing through the field again, and this time also they carried off some of the stones. The man who before had carried off the pebble thought that he would not be caught this time, and although he had no heart in clearing the field, he picked up the largest stone he could find.

When they came to the edge of the field, he expected Christ to turn the stones into bread, as before. But Christ said: “Now we will cast these stones into the river. The man who works only for reward should receive none.”

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

MRS. JOHN A. McCADDIN, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

A correspondent writing to the Exchange for the first time should always give as reference the name and address of her minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

APPEALS

1. Mrs. C. F. Campbell, Rt. 3, Martinsville, Va., would appreciate thread and reading matter for herself and girls 20, 19, 17 and 5 years old. She lives on a farm a mile and a half from anyone and would enjoy receiving the *Cheerful Letter*. Her daughter died recently leaving twin baby boys, a boy 2 and a girl 5 for her to take care of besides her own five children. Her two boys are 13 and 15 years old.

2. I live in the mountains where I don't get out any as there is something wrong with my legs. I have been sick for about two years. I get awfully lonely and would love to receive quilt scraps, embroidery, crochet, reading or anything to cheer an 18-year-old girl. Miss Daisy Farmer, Rt. 1, Rugby, Va.

3. Mrs. Blanche Mikel, Rugby, Va., would like some sewing and embroidery thread and quilt scraps. Her 17-year-old daughter would enjoy stamped pieces and True Story magazines.

4. I am 13 years old and, as I am trying to learn to piece quilts and embroider, am asking the readers of the *Cheerful Letter* to help me along that line with pieces and thread. I hope I am not asking too much. Geneva Pendleton, Stuart, Va.

5. I have not written any of the *Cheerful Letter* friends and would love a word of thanks in the magazine for all their sympathy and thoughtfulness. Mrs. W. Johnson, Peach Bottom, Pa.

6. Thelire Frerichs, Ironsburg, Tenn., is 11 years old and has pieced two quilts together. She would be awfully glad to have print pieces or bits of thread, or reading. She lives in the mountains and is very poor.

7. I have had much bad luck this winter. I fell on the ice and broke some of my ribs and about broke one of my legs. I certainly would be glad if some of the dear friends would send me some sewing material, thread or anything to pass the lonesome hours. I want to thank all the friends for their past kindness. Mrs. Leona Farmer, Sturgills, N. C.

8. Mrs. Cora L. Joyce, Callahan, Fla., is a widow with six children ranging in age from 6 to 18 years. They do not have much cheer and live about a mile and a half from town. Her eyesight is poor but she does a lot of sewing and patches the children's clothes. She would be glad of bedquilt scraps and thread.

9. I wish very much to obtain a guitar. I have learned to play one very well. I would exchange a ukelene, which is a

guitar and violin combined, for it. Miss Myrtle Peters, Floyd, Va.

10. Mrs. M. C. Owen, Sandy Level, Va., gets so lonely and blue at times that she hardly knows what to do. She lost two of her children in six months' time. She has a boy deaf and dumb and two younger boys ages 10 and 5 who would love anything to help pass the time, good reading and pictures. Her 13-year-old girl goes to school. Pieces and bits of thread would be very helpful.

11. I would appreciate crochet thread and stamped pieces. I like to do any kind of handwork, and any kind of cheer would be appreciated as we live way out in the country and it is real lonesome. I also like good reading. Mrs. John Howard, Claussen, S. C.

12. Mrs. Charles Curry, Rt. 1, Leaks-ville, N. C., asks for quilt scraps and reading matter for herself and children 7 and 9 years. She has a baby 6 months old so does not get out much.

13. I am receiving "Needlecraft" which I like so much. I think it must be a *Cheerful Letter* friend who is sending it. I think it is so helpful and am so glad of it. I shall appreciate it if someone will send me some lily bulbs. I am especially anxious for an amaryllis if one can be spared. I had two ferns and oleanders but lost them with the freeze. Emily L. Hicks, Rt. 33, Amherst, Va.

14. Mrs. L. H. Jones, Sturgills, N. C., writes that she lives in the mountains and does not see anyone for a week at a time. She would like to make some quilts for her baby girl's bed, and would enjoy magazines, papers or books.

15. I would like to have some sewing material and thread. I have been sick some this past winter and, as all the children but one little boy go to school, I am lonely. I need sugar and salt bags, and something to mend quilts. Mrs. Hattie Hartsog, Box 83, White Top, Va.

16. Mrs. Estell Lamb, 202 Concord Ave., Charlottesville, Va., will be glad to get a few quilt pieces and pencils, crayons, paper, or anything for her nine children ages running from 2 months to 18 years.

17. I am a lonely widow and live up close to the Blue Ridge Mountains far away from the railroad and not near any public place. My step-son lives with me. Quilt scraps and good reading would help a lot. Mrs. Lelia E. Nolen, Endicott, Va.

18. Mrs. C. R. Baucom, Rt. 2, Polkton, N. C., has seven children from 3 years to 21 years old all living with her. The boys would like Western Stories, also a chart book for the guitar and songs. The girls would appreciate quilt pieces as they like to sew.

19. I want to thank all who have sent us cheer in the past. It has given us lots of joy and we look forward to the next mail. We live off the main road and hardly ever see anyone. I would be glad to get quilt scraps, bits of thread, salt and flour bags for dish towels, or anything for the children. Mrs. Neoma Antry, Crabtree, Ark.

20. Mrs. G. A. Bonner, R.F.D. 2, Big Spring, Tenn., earns her living by picking cotton. She has some children. She would be glad to receive pieces for quilts to help pass away the lonely hours.

21. I have reared nine children, eight boys and one girl, that is, I am trying to rear them. Six of them are in school at the present time. I would appreciate any kindness or benefit I might receive. Mrs. P. F. Trammell, Rt. 1, Box 31, Athens, Texas.

22. Mrs. Susie McCormick, Rugby, Va., lives alone with her 14-year-old granddaughter. They would be pleased to receive papers or sewing material.

23. I am a very bad cripple with infantile paralysis and cannot walk without the aid of crutches and braces. I find life back here in the mountains almost unbearable unless I could walk and be out. I wonder if someone wouldn't like to make this sad heart glad by sending a little bit of cheer. I would enjoy sewing, knitting, crochet thread, also reading. Miss Mersy Testerman, Rt. 1, Box 84, Rugby, Va.

24. Have heard about your wonderful *Cheerful Letter* Exchange so am writing in hopes of receiving books, magazines,

quilt scraps, embroidery thread or yarn. I am alone most of the time as my little 6-year-old son goes to school. Am interested in all kinds of patchwork. Mrs. Nora Brown, Nail, Ark.

25. I am crippled up with rheumatism and have to stay in the house part of the time, and would be so thankful for quilt pieces, scraps of thread or reading. I help take care of my three little grandchildren, 3 months, 5 and 7 years old, who would be happy to receive a few cards or anything else. May the Lord bless every one connected with your *Cheerful Letter* work. Mrs. Lula Oglevie, Rocky Hill, Ark.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Mrs. John Howard from Society Hills to Claussen, S. C.

Mrs. Verne Davis from Pedlar Mills to Agricola, Va.

Mrs. T. O. Dunovant from Spencer to Ridgeway, Va.

Mrs. Wyatt from Thaxton to Grayson, N. C.) (The Thaxton Post Office has been discontinued.)

Mrs. Sam Hancock from Nettle Ridge, Va., to Madison, N. C.

Mrs. Ashton Ware from Knoll to Murat, Va.

Mrs. Forrest Martin from R. 4, Wills Point, to R. B., Waxahachie, Texas.

MARRIAGE

Miss Gertrude Amos is now Mrs. Gertrude A. Kinnell, Asbury College, Wilmore, Va.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Dewey Duncan, Stuart, Va.

Mrs. Mabel Bacon, Wisdom, Montana. (She had been the correspondent of a lady in Winchendon, Mass., for over thirty years.)

YOU'LL FIND IT

Look for goodness, look for gladness;

You will meet them all the while;

If you bring a smiling visage

To the glass, you'll meet a smile.

THAT LOVELINESS OF LITTLE THINGS

The pleasant days are made up of little things,—of sixty minutes to the hour, for instance; of imperceptible gradations of light; of the unfolding of buds; of the perfecting of a bird's song, small note on note. It behooves one to stand now and then, to take a leisurely breath and con over one's mental treasures. What have we added to the store that neither dust nor moth doth corrupt? How have we laid line upon lovely line? What can we say of our stewardship who have such wealth of beauty, such good memories mellowed through the grateful years? Let us give praise for little things, for the fragrant minute that gilds the whole hour.

There was a day in summer when a dragon fly came to maturity by the pool at the end of the garden. Through the late morning he hung inert, gray and fettered. Noon came and he labored his slow way out of the cramping darkness, clung limp and colorless to his hold and let the blessed sun do the rest. Did you ever realize that, besides waking a world to light and warmth and song, the sun dries out a dragon fly and brings the tiny lizard gratefully to his chosen stone? The sun has his "little things," sandwiched between more mighty tasks! The dragon fly stirred, stretched out his cramped wings, still creased, moved a little, easefully. The spread wings began to wake into glory. An indescribable, transparent beauty irradiated them—they glowed through crystal and opal to rose, flickered with purple—then clothed themselves in a blue that trembled and deepened, that bathed the now shimmering body under translucent wave on wave of color. The miracle was complete. The lovely thing launched itself suddenly on the still air, hung over the deep cool green of the pool, flashed and darted and poised, a living jewel—beauty and splendor and tenderness and patience made manifest in one little creature that danced under the sun.

In a lift at a store one day was a mother with two pink babies; one little

pink baby, one bigger pink baby. They wore small pink furry coats and smaller, pinker, furrier bonnets. And they had round, pink faces that smiled out on all and sundry. The bigger held the lift-boy's hand (to his embarrassed delight, he being young and new and friendly, smacking of younger sisters and brothers), and the smaller baby sat on her mother's arm and held out a fat, friendly hand to whoever would take it. The lift grounded. The small, pink furry figures disappeared, the rest of the lift passengers smiled at each other and dispersed. The little lift-boy craned his neck after the last pink flutter and clanged his gates.

A man who owns a picture shop in a provincial town keeps a picture of a clipper in one corner of his window. No matter what his general show of pictures may be, no matter how he alters his display with season or fashion, that one corner remains inviolate to clippers. A ship is changed for a sister ship now and then, but that is all.

"You see," he explained when questioned, "there's an old naval man living here on mighty small rations. An inland town must be a sore thing for a seaman, I reckon. I noticed him first when I had a show of clippers, and the way he hung on the window made me promise myself never to let him pass by without something to dream over and be glad at."

And so, through more than a year, the seaman had gone friended and comforted. "One of these days," the picture man said, "I'll call him in for a crack."

There's comfort for the comfortless,

And honey for the bee,
and one day the shop door will open and the seaman step inside.

That same picture man was asked to cut down and to frame an original etching. He examined its mount critically and laid it down. "I can't do any cutting," he said. "I've a notion about pictures. I can't spoil one just for the sake of an order. The man that did that," bending again over the etching, "fixed it all up in a balanced way, and it's not in me to spoil his good work." His voice

deepened. "I'd go without my breakfast rather."

A sheep-dog, a cat and a kitten make a triangle of friendship in a house on the hill. They are never far apart. "Where is June, Bob?" the dog is asked when the small black kitty is long away, and about the garden he goes, pushing an inquiring nose round bush and flower. Then he tries the paddock, rounds the bonfire, searches the raspberry canes, walks with sweet care between currants and marrow bed—returning at last with June at his heels, Solly, the cat, trotting fussily an inch or two ahead.

June is only a baby puss and has manners yet to learn. She pushes under Bob's nose without compunction and picks out the meat from his plate, or tugs at the other end of his bone. And he, the fine Old English Bob-tail, wags indulgently or looks up into loved faces with dear eyes that say: "We must be tender with all growing things."

They follow at heel, these three, through fine weather or wet, down the garden to feed the chickens, up the paddock to stir the bonfire, round the field to gather hips and haws, trotting sedately, leaping and running and glancing. "Pussies," we call, and they come bounding with tiny questioning "prrt?" and "Bob," we say, and he gambols up with open laughing mouth.

Loveliest of all the little things for which our thanksgiving wells up is the print of bird's feet in the snow on our doorstep. What honor is here! To what high proof of brotherhood we have been called by the dozen twittering voices, coaxed from table and fire by small feet seeking window-sill and step! Not all the glories of the winter dawn can lift the heart with such a throb as do those tiny prints.

Last summer a wren, little feathered mouse, sat on a rail above the water-cress beds with her two minute babies, fluffy, thimble-sized little treasures, launched on an adventure beyond their wildest dreams.

Love feareth no evil.

ICELAND'S WOMEN ARE HONORED IN THE HOME

MINNA C. BUDLONG

One cannot help but admire a people who so many centuries ago, as "The Bondman" chronicles, had attained an approximately absolute sense of justice, stern though it were; who are proving such valuable additions to the citizenry of our developing West, and who have an educational and religious background that permits a millennial celebration.

Fog prevented a view of the capital city as we approached the harbor on a June evening in 1930. Seeing from the porthole at 4 A. M. that the mist had cleared, I hastened on deck for an unrestricted view. On one side was the city, following the curve of the harbor, its low houses grouped in a mosaic of pastel shades of pinks and blues, greens and browns, in the soft morning light. Next was an expanse of green (greener than the famed Emerald Isle), beyond which stretched hills of brown, rising to the stern dark mountains of lava, with an occasional bright glint of glacier or waterfall. On another side stood the bold headland, bare and bleak, but softened at that hour by the marvelous blue atmosphere which clothes so many of their scenes in majesty. On the fourth side was the wide sea, over which we had come to this unique experience. We were each alone with the freshness of creation.

Women have equal suffrage with men in Iceland, but seem not to have used it, as have the women of other countries, to establish independent leagues or movements. The home is still the unit, as in New England one hundred years ago, and the family moves in concert rather than in separate groups of men, women, and young people. I asked if there were no study clubs to correspond to our federated women's club work, and was told the only united work of women was their cooperation with the government in raising funds to complete and equip the large hospital building in which many of the visitors to the millennial were lodged. Home training is still *comme il faut* in

Iceland and accounts for the acquaintance with literature common to all inhabitants. The long nights give ample opportunity for reading and discussing and memorizing the treasures of their history and classics. They all sing. The harmony of voices is pronounced, but more noticeable still is the way groups will stand and sing hymn after hymn of many verses, without a word in sight to aid memory. There are only occasional "movies" or other outside entertainments to divide attention, and the result is a mental training lost from our home life today.

Icelandic women have undisputed independence and honor in the home, but their names are conspicuously absent from lists of original writers and artists. A few are credited with short stories, but the Icelandic woman best known outside her own country today is Anna Borg, a native of Reykjavik, and now a permanent actress in the King's Theater in Copenhagen, one of the foremost theaters in Europe. She was "loaned" to her home people for the celebration, and one fortunate enough to gain entrance to the little theater (seating 300), where she and Agust Kvaran presented "Eyvind of the Hills," cannot forget that wonderful portrayal of primitive Icelandic life, with their restrained but forceful acting in perfect tempo and rhythm.

It is startling to see a Roman-stripe scarf of heavy silk covering a baby carriage in the streets of Reykjavik or a modern high-heeled, reptile-skin shoe appearing beneath the long, dark, wool skirt of the native costume. But in such trifles is change indicated. The dress of men and children would attract no attention in any of our cities. The women obligingly wore their national garb in that gala week. It pleased the tourists and added to the picturesqueness of the scene. It is a rich and dignified apparel, the skirt long, full, dark and plain; the bodice heavy with embroidery and silver-gilt ornaments; all covered by a long fur-edged cape or woolen shawl and topped by the small black cap with its graceful

silk tassel, beneath which the braided hair is looped up in the back. Individuality appears in the variety of patterns and colors seen in the flowing silk aprons. The festal costume has a most elaborate high headdress of white, with long veil. The wife of an official was a picture as she passed on the street on her way to dine with the queen, her gala costume, heavy with gold ornaments and embroidery, only partly covered by the long, rich velvet cape; the headdress with its gold wreath and the evening slippers with their golden heels adding the finishing touches to a vision of loveliness. Indian scarfs and Persian shawls reminded sightseers they were among a seafaring people, a nation in which young men have been encouraged to travel, as is shown by bits of Chinese jade or Japanese prints or old Flemish desks appearing in unexpected places. The beautiful ornaments with which the costumes are decorated are made on the island, and much carving of wood is done in the long winter nights, as well as spinning and knitting; but most of the necessities and luxuries of life are imported.

No one who witnessed the procession slowly climbing the rocky pathway between towering cliffs to Almannagjá, with hundreds of bright-colored banners unfurled and thousands of deep-throated voices breaking into the stately national anthems, can doubt the earnestness and devotion of this remarkable people. Nor can their idealism be doubted when one realizes they had left their business, closed their stores, turned away from all the profits that might have been made those three days from tourists eager to buy "something made in Iceland," in order to give themselves wholeheartedly to a national, religious commemoration. Seldom does one see so dense a mass of humanity, animated by one deep absorbing purpose. No one pushed or crowded in the press. At least, if one did, we saw at once it was not an islander who was remiss in courtesy. Each helped his neighbor on the oft-precarious footing of the rocks. Each felt the deep religious

meaning of the ceremonial. It is an inspiring thought, a nation without army, navy, or fortifications, aiming to maintain peace through the uprightness of the individual.

It is not by chance that a recent book on this country is entitled "Pioneers of Freedom." Freedom is in the air; in the poise with which, sure-footed, they step across the loose stones of the lava-strewn mountains; in the kindliness of their welcome and the wideness of their hospitality. It was even apparent in the bounding grace of their actress, who lifted the narrow confines of her stage into a wide, open-air view of the centuries-long progress of her people toward liberty. The year 1940 will see the realization of their dream.

It is interesting to travel over the four hundred or more miles of automobile roads and see the earlier modes of transportation contrasted with the new. Fast freight in Iceland, not so long ago, was by two-wheeled wooden carts, drawn by one pony. The driver walked, shouting threats and encouragement to the intelligent, willing animal, with frequent stops for rest sorely needed by both man and beast. Speeding by auto, we passed a caravan of such antiquated conveyances carrying supplies into the interior to complete a telephone line across south-eastern Iceland.

Development of island resources is on the verge of great expansion; but even so, emigration must continue for many years. They are a valuable addition to the life of any nation, these people of whom it has been said: "All this they do in the firm faith that the eyes of the gods are upon them. Theirs was in truth a simple creed: to do something and to do it well, so that it might last as long as the world lasted."—*The Christian Register*.

The value of life depends far more on its *interest* than on its *comfort*.

—George MacDonald.

An electric brake for automobiles has been developed.

WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

BEAR STORIES FROM JASPER PARK

GRETA GASKIN CARROLL

No animal of our American forests has so thoroughly captured the imagination of human beings as the droll black bear. Yellowstone Park and Jasper Park, the two most famous bear sanctuaries on the continent, have become popular with people from all parts of the world because of these bears. For four years, at Jasper Park, while it was being prepared for the public, a crew of several hundred men worked to build the station, lodge, cottages, the golf course, and the Jasper Highway. The black bears were numerous, and the crew had many interesting experiences with them.

The cook had for a friend a big black bear named Bella. The dining room, cook house, and bunk house formed a group of buildings in a beautiful setting looking toward the Pyramid Mountains. Bears prowled down from these heights and discovered the dump at the rear, where they daily picked up choice scraps of leftovers or licked out discarded syrup tins. Bella, who had a keen sense of smell and an amiable disposition, followed the savory odors wafted from the cook house and made her way there. "Hello, old lady!" greeted the cook, and proceeded to feed her. She came so often that it soon became a regular part of the day's work to put out food for her. She would eat it, show her relish by licking her face and paws, then strike back for the hills. One night she brought a cub with her. That, of itself, was unusual enough to attract the cook's attention, but Bella behaved queerly, too. Instead of eating the pan of supper the cook had put out, she walked restlessly back and forth like a person in trouble. She came up to the door, looked in, walked off, returned to the window and, standing upright, gazed inside.

"Boys," said the cook, "there's something the matter with Bella. I'm going to see."

So he took off his apron and followed her. She at once started on the back trail, her steady gait and satisfied mien telling her friend he had understood what she wanted. Near the foot of a steep slope she stopped, and there a pitiful sight confronted them. Her other cub had got himself wedged fast between a log and the trunk of one of the trees.

The cook called some of the men and they lifted the log, releasing the cub. He was badly jammed, but managed to stagger a few steps. His mother licked his bruised sides and coaxed him along toward the mountain till they disappeared among the bushes of the trail. The cook never saw them again, for, from that night, Bella ceased her visits.

At a quarry inside the Park, where a cement company was crushing limestone, a tall blacksmith worked all day sharpening tools for the men. His summer evenings he spent with Brownie. For three years the strapping blacksmith and the huge black bear enjoyed a remarkable friendship. Like the other bears, Brownie was first attracted to the dump by a medley of scraps, but soon the blacksmith got in the habit of strolling down with cake saved from the supper table in his pockets and she always waited for that. Seeing how good-natured she was, he taught her to come close, stand up, and eat the cake from his outspread palm held just under his chin. Few men would care to have a bear come so close, but not once did Brownie display any bad manners and the blacksmith grew more and more fond of her.

One night two or three of the men in the quarry gang went with him, but one of them proved incapable of appreciating the privilege. After Brownie had stood up and eaten her cake, she backed down on all fours again and began to smell around the dump. Suddenly a tomato can struck her on the spine. She winced, gave her tormentor (who had done it "just for fun and to see what she'd do") a reproofing look, and again went on nosing for

tidbits, choosing to treat the matter as an accident. A second can struck with a clatter beside her. At this indignity Brownie bent a searching look on the thrower and another on the blacksmith that said, "How could you, after all these years, bring anyone here who would treat me like this?"

She scrambled into the bushes and lunged off mountainward. The blacksmith knew she was deeply offended and was very angry at the man who threw the can. The next night he waited as usual—the next—and the next. Yes, and for many, many nights did he walk to the dump, hoping to run across her by chance. But Brownie did not come back that summer or the next.

Bears can sometimes be very provoking if not "kept in their place," as people say. They have a natural love of sweet things, and as lively a sense of fun and mischief as a child. One evening the cook was sitting in his tidy kitchen peacefully smoking his pipe and reading the paper, when a noise made him think someone had entered. The doors had been left open to air out the place and the cool air of evening had stolen in; likewise three bears. A footstep, the rattle of a plate, the clink of cutlery, all passed unheeded until at the drip, drip, drip of something trickling from table to floor, he called, "Who is there? Get out and leave things alone!" Silence. Then gustatory sounds of industrious eating. "Well, that's queer," thought he. "Can't be any of the men—" Paper in hand, he stepped to the door. Throwing up both arms, he shook the sheets in rage. The three bears stood helping themselves to the large bowls of peaches and prunes that invitingly dotted the table at intervals. "Hey, clear out of here, you black imps, and be all-fired quick about it!" The enraged cook rushed at them brandishing the paper, and let out such a yell that the bears swiftly disappeared. Chasing the last one out, the cook fastened the door and began to clear up the mess the uninvited callers had made of his clean floor and nicely set breakfast tables. He didn't get back to

finish his paper that evening, and he found it much more convenient to open windows—from the top!—when he again aired the dining room.

One engaging cub used to push the screen door open and walk into the dining room (while the men were eating, if you please!), where he helped himself to jam from the side table. Sometimes he stuck his little black snout into a newly opened jar and no one made any objections. You see the dining room staff thought it a ticklish matter to try to drive him away while the men were perfectly accustomed to him and simply went on eating. One day he clasped a pot of jam in his front paws and was going to take off the cover when the foreman came up and took him by the back of the neck to throw him out. The little bear twisted his head and tried to bite; so the man guzzled him with both hands and, to an accompaniment of rasping growls, dragged him, still holding on to the jam, to the veranda, where he threw him over the railing. Over and over down the knoll side rolled the cub, till he sat up near the bottom. The pot of jam had gone in another direction, but the little fellow spied it. Seizing it in his arms he ran off, giving a last comical look back as if to say, "Aha, I got what I was after, anyway. And I don't care either—it was worth it!"

There was another cub that came down from the mountains early one spring, cherishing in his friendly heart a fondness for everybody with paper bags or pockets and in his little black head a memory of numerous chocolate bars and caramels that kind people fed him the previous summer. But this was still very early in the season, and though he searched about in the customary haunts he didn't see anybody except a man or two who belonged about the place and who said, "Get away out of here!" in a way that even young bears understood meant a shower of stones if they started any nonsense. So the little bear went down to the lake. There beside the path in a pleasant open spot sat a nice young lady on a funny little stool putting splotches

of color on a board—or something like that—stuck up in front of her and, oh, joy to an expectant little bear's heart! she had on a short coat with most likely and conspicuous pockets! Now pockets meant candy, or they should. So he walked softly up, sniffed, and stuck his nose into the nearest one. The artist sprang to her feet, uttered a shriek, flung up her arms, and dashed for the lake. The little bear followed just to see what it was all about. And what do you think the artist did? She dived into the water! "Oh, well," said the cub to himself, "I don't care to go in there; that ends it." So he turned away and went back and smelled at the easel, giving it a lick to see if it tasted nice. "Go away! Go away!" The young lady kept screaming and waving her arms; so he saw no use in staying longer, but trotted off up a hillside where he dined on mice and grubs, very tender

and tasty, to be had merely by turning over stones. —*The Christian Register.*

INASMUCH

Because ye spake a helpful word
To a weary child of mine—
That strengthened faith, and hope revived
In the promises divine;
Because to one in sorrow,
Bowed down with heavy grief,
Thy words of sympathy and love
Brought comfort and relief;
Because the sick ye visited,
Or sent some cheerful word,
Thy service to my "little ones"
I honor and reward!
For as ye did it unto these
Ye did it unto me;
And with what measure ye have given
It shall be given thee.

—*Elizabeth R. Bouret.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

MRS. HARRY A. STEVENS, *Chairman*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

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ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

WHERE TO WRITE

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